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EDITOR · R PALME DUTT

Britain and Empire — R. P. D.

Europe Today (ii) — R. H. S. Crossman, M.P.

The General Crisis of Capitalism — E. Varga

A Trip to the U.S.A. — Wm. Gallacher, M.P.

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CONTENTS

February, 1947

Page

Notes of the Month—*Britain and Empire* by R. P. D. 33

Europe Today (ii) by R. H. S. CROSSMAN, M.P. 44

The Agricultural Bill by WOGAN PHILIPPS 45

A Trip to the United States by WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P. 49

The General Crisis of Capitalism by E. VARGA 56

Book Reviews—

The Soviet Impact on the Western World by E. H. CARR 62

Shorter Notices by A. G. P. and R. F. 63-64

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(Continued on page iii of cover).

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Britain and Empire

IN a famous statement Mr. Churchill declared during the war that he had no intention of being Prime Minister of Britain in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. He was right. He is not Prime Minister of Britain. This does not mean, however, that the liquidation of the British Empire is already taking place. Neither the paeans nor the laments over its supposed demise are yet justified. But both the British people and the peoples of the Empire are coming to realise with increasing clearness that the old relations must end and that a new relation of free peoples must take its place.

Two Conferences

This month two Conferences will be discussing the new problems of Britain and the post-war world. The first is the Communist Party Congress, which will have to consider all the manifold questions of home and foreign policy arising in the second year of the Labour Government. The second is the Empire Conference of Communist Parties—a new venture which will bring together for the first time accredited delegates from the growing Communist movement in all parts of the British Empire. At this Conference representatives from the Communist Parties in the Empire, from the Dominions, from India and Ceylon and Burma, from Malaya and Hong Kong, from Cyprus and the Middle East, from Africa and outlying regions will be able to meet in common with the representatives from Britain to exchange experiences and discuss common problems. This is a significant new development of the modern world situation. Previously there have been Commonwealth Labour Conferences: but these have been in the main confined to representatives of the privileged sections of the white workers. Here for the first time the representatives of the vanguard of the working masses of the five hundred millions of the Empire, without distinction of colour, race or nation, will be able to proclaim to the world from the heart of the Empire, in London, the aims and the needs of their peoples, their views of the policies that are being pursued, their demands and their struggle. It is appropriate that this wider Conference should follow immediately on the Communist Party Congress. For the problems before both Conferences are closely related. Socialism has long taught the unity of interests of the British people and the peoples of the Empire in the common struggle for liberation. Events today are proving the truth of this in a hundred forms.

From the Old to the New

Alike for Britain and for the peoples of the Empire a new situation has arisen since the war, the defeat of fascism and the advance of the liberation movement over the world. The old basis of British imperialism, of world domination, colonial monopoly and overseas

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tribute, which has for so long held one quarter of the human race in its grip and governed the social and political structure in Britain, is breaking down. It will not work any longer. Both economically and politically, and also in a military sense, it is proving bankrupt. All the desperate attempts to shore up the old basis in a new dress can neither reverse the changed relations of world power nor stem the tide of popular advance. The peoples of the Empire press forward to freedom and are not content with shams. The British people, more alert than the representatives of the old ruling class, are also seeking new paths. More and more clearly the inescapable choice opens out before them. Either to cling to the old crumbling basis and go down into the depths with world reaction, squandering man-power and resources to defend the indefensible, unequally yoked to the Wall Street moneylenders, and sinking into an economic slough, financial dependence and eventual war. Or to strike forward along the path of basic social and political reconstruction and establish a new non-imperialist basis in the world in unity with the advancing progressive peoples. This is the essential choice underlying all the problems and controversies which are now agitating public opinion and the labour movement.

Man-power and Empire

There is not a single problem of British reconstruction today, of British home and foreign policy, which is not inseparably linked up with this question of Empire, that is, with this necessity of advance to a non-imperialist basis. Take the question of man-power. There is a crucial shortage of man-power. The Cabinet is issuing a White Paper on this shortage and on the urgent need of half a million additional workers in the key industries. Proposals are put forward that the only solution is to be found in the importation of half a million foreign workers into Britain. The solution is sought to be found in the settlement of Polish fascists in Britain or in the retention of German prisoners of war. *The Times* writes in an editorial on January 17:—

> The case for a selective immigration of up to 500,000 foreign workers during the next few years is exceedingly strong, and it is regrettable that neither the Government nor the labour movement appear to have given much thought to it.

Yet where is Britain's man-power? What is the main cause of the shortage? Every one knows the answer. The latest return, for November, shows 1,510,000 in the armed forces, and 474,000 engaged on making equipment and supplies for the armed forces: a total of close on two millions or one-tenth of the available man-power, and a multiplication of the armed forces more than threefold on the pre-war figure of 480,000. Yet, when the question is raised why demobilisation has been slowed down, and why these enormous numbers are necessary, Mr. Attlee in reply points, not merely to the needs of defence or obligations under the United Nations and in ex-enemy

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countries, but to imperialist commitments in the Near East or the Far East. If all armed forces were brought home, except for ex-enemy countries, and the level of armed forces brought down, it should be possible to release one million men. How can the crucial question of man-power be discussed without relation to the problem of the Empire?

Balance of Payments Dilemma

Or take the key dilemma of Britain's present economic situation —the deficit on the balance of payments. Britain is at present not paying its way, and is dependent on the American and Canadian loans, which at the present rate will soon be exhausted. The estimated deficit for 1946 was £400 million. But what is the main cause of this gigantic deficit? Before the war there was already a deficit averaging nearly £50 million; this already indicated the decline of the old imperialist basis and the need of radical reconstruction of British economy. Estimates for 1946 indicate that the normal balance of payments, apart from special government expenditure, would show, despite the shrinkage of foreign investment income, a roughly similar deficit of £50 million (excess of imports about £330 million, against estimated overseas income from investments, shipping, etc., of about £280 million). But this is inflated to a deficit of some £400 million, because of £350 million overseas Government expenditure, of which £300 million is overseas military expenditure (Dalton's statement in February, 1946). At present this deficit is paid for by the American and Canadian loans, of which £250 million have been used in six months. At this rate they will be exhausted by the end of 1948. And then? Present policy offers only two alternatives. Either a yet more desperate drive to force up exports, starving home needs, limiting or cutting down the workers' earnings, in an impoverished world market at the very moment when the most ferocious American export drive, consequent on the expected sharpening of the American economic situation by 1948, will be under way. Or renewed recourse to the American moneylender to beg for more credits under harsher terms of enslavement. Is it not time to tackle this problem at the root —the deficit caused by an imperialist foreign policy which is distorting British economy, crippling home reconstruction and leading to bankruptcy? Once again the basic problems of British reconstruction, of the British economic situation, cannot be tackled without reference to the problem of the Empire.

Foreign Policy Controversy

Or consider the present acute controversy on British foreign policy. There is strong criticism, and justified criticism, of the increasingly close line-up of British policy in a political, diplomatic and military bloc with American monopolist reaction against all the progressive forces of the world, against the new democracies in Europe, against the Socialist Soviet Union and against the colonial

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peoples. Official innocence of course replies that there is no such bloc, and that it is only a mare's nest of malevolent critics; that the open calculations of every fascist and pro-fascist and reactionary group in the world staking their hopes on such an Anglo-American bloc and a third world war only reveals a similar state of illusion; that Mr. Churchill's Fulton speech was only an academic exercise in favour of Anglo-American friendship and committed no one, and therefore requires no repudiation; that the Anglo-American arms agreement is only a practical arrangement of convenience; that the sending of parallel Anglo-American notes of protest at regular intervals to every advanced democracy in Europe only expresses the spiritual identity of Anglo-Saxon ideals; that the Anglo-American monopoly of the atom bomb is an obvious precaution in the interests of world peace; and that the extension of Anglo-American military, naval and air bases over every corner of the world is a powerful contribution to world security. Official humbug solemnly adds that British policy is to line up with no one, neither with the United States nor with the Soviet Union, but faithfully and single-mindedly to support the United Nations as its anchor, salvation and guiding star.

Anglo-American Bloc

Incidentally, official humbug trips up in its excessive protestations at this point by coolly ignoring the existence of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance, and subsequently gets tied into knots in explaining away the slip. But the practical position is only the more revealingly illustrated by the slip. There exists on paper an Anglo-Soviet Alliance, which is at present completely ignored in practice. There exists on paper, at any rate in public, no Anglo-American alliance; but it is completely carried out in practice. The controversy raised by the critics of present British foreign policy is wilfully misrepresented when it is presented as if it were a conflict between two schools of thought, one advocating an alliance with America, and the other an alliance with the Soviet Union. It is obvious that a serious democratic foreign policy, as the critics have made abundantly clear, must be based on the triple partnership of Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States fulfilling their joint responsibility—in accordance with Teheran, Crimea and the Charter—of co-operative leadership of the United Nations for peace and the prevention of aggression, for disarmament, for the suppression of fascism, and for the independence of nations. The charge against the actions of the Anglo-American representatives since Potsdam is precisely that they have broken away from their obligations and repeatedly and in a concerted manner offended against the principles of the Charter and tripartite co-operation by their "anti-veto" campaign and denunciation of "Big Three dictatorship"; by their exclusive arms pacts and strategic manoeuvres; by their blocking of disarmament proposals and piling up of atom bombs; by their sabotage of the Trusteeship

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provisions; by their protection of fascism in Spain and Greece, rebuilding of monopolist reaction in Germany and assistance to reactionary pro-fascist elements in Eastern Europe; and by their overrunning of countries all over the world and establishment of bases. It is this practical policy of an Anglo-American imperialist bloc which makes nonsense of occasional declarations of abstract devotion to the principles of the United Nations; which arouses the resentment of democratic representatives and the applause of reaction all over the world; which weakens and endangers the United Nations and plays into the hands of war intrigues; and which constantly places Britain, despite the progressive anti-Tory majority in Parliament, on the wrong side in the great international issues of our day, so that Britain's foreign policy wins praise from Churchill and the Tory benches and silence from the Labour benches.

Co-operation and Conflict

But what underlies this Anglo-American bloc? Why does Britain line up in this way with American imperialist reaction, despite the sharp conflict of economic interests, and despite the contrast between the anti-Tory Parliament and the Republican Congress and American suspicion of British "socialistic experiments?" It might have been thought that there was an obvious identity of British popular interests with the progressive democratic countries which have working-class socialist-communist majorities and are building planned economies, and with the Socialist Soviet Union, as the best alignment to hold in check the aggressive designs of American reaction, counter the threatening American slump, and maintain democratic co-operation through the United Nations. What is the countervailing factor which makes a supposed community of interests between Labour Britain and the Republican Diehards of Wall Street? The reason is not to be sought wholly in adoration of the nobility of the American character as depicted by the Hollywood film magnates. It is not sufficiently explained by the remarkable similarities of the two languages. It is not even wholly to be sought in the identity of spiritual ideals between the colour bar policies of a Smuts and of a Byrnes, although here we may be coming closer to the trail. The decisive reason lies in more practical considerations. Britain and the United States represent the two main imperialist Powers of the post-war world. This does not mean that their interests are identical. On the contrary, there is sharp conflict between the aggressive and expanding American imperialism and the weakening and declining British imperialism. But they maintain in practice a common front against the advancing tide which threatens to engulf all imperialist interests. The common factor is imperialism. But this co-operation conceals a curious relationship of simultaneous conflict and dependence.

Deadweight of Empire

Britain must line up with America, as the franker defenders of the policy declare in off-the-record talks, because Britain is depen-

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dent on America. Britain is declared to be dependent on America economically and strategically. But we have already seen that the main reason for the economic dependence lies in the crushing weight of imperialist commitments. This situation is still clearer in the strategic sphere. The United States has now succeeded to command of the seas. The United States holds both air and naval superiority. This means that the maintenance of the British Empire is strategically dependent on the United States. Here we come to the real crux of the policy. The British imperialists know that their only hope to maintain the empire in post-war conditions lies in complete strategic co-operation with American imperialism. They understand very well the dilemma that the expansionist designs of American imperialism, however much the publicity hue-and-cry may be most noisily directed along anti-Soviet and anti-communist channels, are in cold hard practice directed not least against the British Empire. But they still hope to survive the embrace and maintain their position as, at any rate, junior partners of the more powerful American imperialism. This situation of enforced co-operation concealing conflict, of an unequal marriage of rivals, received illuminating expression in Churchill's statement, in one of his encounters with Roosevelt during the Atlantic Charter meeting, as reported by Elliott Roosevelt:—

> Mr. President, I believe you are trying to do away with the British Empire. Every idea you entertain about the structure of the post-war world demonstrates it. But in spite of that, in spite of that we know that you constitute our only hope. And *you* know that *we* know it. *You* know that *we* know that without America the Empire won't stand.

The deadweight of the ever more desperate effort to maintain the Empire still ties Britain to American reaction, despite the defeat of Churchill and Toryism at the polls, and in direct contradiction to the social and political interests of the British people in their aim to advance towards socialism.

Four Wars

At this moment, at the opening of 1947, four wars are in progress in different parts of the world—in China, in Indo-China, in Greece and in Palestine. There is also still latent war in Indonesia, for which, under cover of the truce, Dutch troops are being trained and equipped in Britain. These wars might be thought of concern to the United Nations. In practice, the United Nations is powerless to act, since four of the five leading Powers of the United Nations are engaged in these wars. All the Permanent Powers of the Security Council except the Soviet Union are engaged in one or other of these wars. The United States and Chiang Kai Shek are jointly engaged in the war on Chinese democracy. France under its present leadership, despite the protest of the Communist Party, is engaged in Indo-China in warfare against Viet-Nam. Britain is engaged in Greece and in Palestine. What is to be done about this situation? Does it mean that the United Nations must be written off as a failure, and that, as the

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legalists argue, there is a fatal flaw in the Charter, since it is at present unable to prevent colonial wars and military expeditions by imperialist Great Powers? The legalist conclusion is worse than useless, and turns the real issue upside down. The Charter was not established in order to turn minor wars into major wars between the Powers. The Charter was established in order to provide means of democratic co-operation which could eliminate both minor wars and major wars. The effectiveness of the Charter depends above all upon the victory of the democratic progressive forces within each country, and especially in the key countries, the Great Powers. It is here that we hold a special responsibility in Britain; and Britain's role can play a very great part in the success of the United Nations. The fight for world peace is bound up with the fight against the colonial system, that tap-root of modern wars. The success of the United Nations requires the partnership of free and equal nations. Our concern must be that Britain is aligned with the democratic progressive forces of the world which are striving for these aims, which work to strengthen and not to disrupt the United Nations. But for this we must put our own house in order. We must end military intervention in other countries and domination of the peoples of the Empire, as well as end the exclusive arms arrangements with American reaction.

Does the Empire Exist?

Today there is widespread and growing recognition in democratic opinion in this country that it is necessary to end with the old basis of imperialism and to recognise the right to national freedom of the peoples who have been held subject in the Empire. The old type of jingo expression is confined to a narrowing majority and is not viewed with official favour. The general principle of the right of national freedom is widely conceded as a principle, at any rate in the case of those peoples whose degree of political advancement, organisation and active national struggle has compelled the issue to be faced. It is no longer the general principle that is the main point of conflict, but the practice. Today the claim is made by Government spokesmen, and widely echoed in official propaganda, both in the Labour and Tory press, that the break with imperialism has already taken place, and that complete freedom has already been granted to the leading peoples of the empire on the basis of the various constitutional plans which have been drawn up in the recent period or which are being prepared or negotiated. Have we not offered independence to India, to Egypt, to Burma? Has not America granted independence to the Philippines? The charge of imperialism is declared to be obsolete; it no longer exists. A gigantic press and publicity campaign has been organised to reinforce this picture. Nor has this campaign been without success. Despite apparently obvious material, tangible and ocular evidence of continued colonial ordinances, police arrests, police firing, military occupation garrisons, the belief has almost been created among wide

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democratically minded people that the Empire no longer really exists.

"Obsolete Labels"

Mr. Morrison, after declaring in New York in January of last year that "we are great friends of the jolly old Empire and are going to stick to it," proclaimed in September (*Observer*, September 29, 1946) that Britain

> need not be unduly concerned if people seek to attach to us obsolete labels such as "imperialism" and "capitalism."

The *Daily Herald*, answering criticisms by Henry Wallace of British imperialism, replied (September 14, 1946):—

> Now we would like to ask Mr. Wallace a few straight questions. Perhaps he would be good enough to answer.
>
> First, where does he find the evidence of this British imperialist policy? Does he find it in India? If so, how does he explain the fact that, following the visit of the British Cabinet Mission, Jawaharlal Nehru has become Prime Minister of India and that country is free if it wishes to pursue its own independent future? . . . Since the end of the war Britain has abandoned any imperialist claims on India; she has sought a new treaty on an equal basis with a sovereign Egypt; she has approved plans for political advance in a dozen colonial territories.
>
> If this is an "imperialist" policy, then words have no meaning.

To judge from his subsequent utterances, it is to be feared that Henry Wallace has remained unconvinced.

Myths to Save the Empire

Unfortunately, this belief that imperialism belongs to the past and that freedom has already been granted to India and other subject peoples is a dangerous illusion. The elaborate press and publicity campaign organised to put over this belief is a bluff which conceals the real facts of the situation. Only gradually the suspicion that something is wrong begins to break through for the general public, as the grandly publicised independence offers give place to protracted deadlocks and crises, compelling ceaselessly renewed interventions, awards and vetos and continued military occupation. Even then the blame is assiduously laid on the colonial peoples themselves for their impossible behaviour and divisions, defeating the benevolent intentions of their rulers and compelling them reluctantly to delay the gift of freedom. This illusion that independence has already been conceded, and that the only remaining barrier arises from the colonial peoples themselves, becomes today one of the main obstacles to real liberation, because it lulls the democratic movement in Britain and encourages the view that nothing more needs to be done on this side, at the very moment when the actual situation is most serious and requires the most urgent response on our part. Hence it is essential for all serious opponents of imperialism and supporters of national freedom to look behind the labels and judge correctly the real situation.

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New Imperialist Technique

It is true that important changes are taking place. But in what direction? It is true that, in face of the worldwide colonial revolt after the war, which is too widespread to admit of any easy suppression by force alone, inperialist policy is trying out new constitutional forms and seeking new forms of political settlement. But these new forms of political settlement by no means take the character of straightforward military withdrawal and transfer of power. Instead, they take the character of complex constitutional settlements, which play on divisions, disrupt the national movements and seek to win over the privileged upper-class elements to co-operation under cover of treaties protecting imperialist strategic interests. The technique of offering a spurious and controlled "independence" is in reality not so new as is sometimes suggested. It was already familiar from the example of Egypt a quarter of a century ago. It was repeated subsequently for Irak and more recently for Transjordania. America has followed the same method for the Philippines. None of these States is really independent. In all of them the economic and military domination of imperialism is in practice continued under cover of constitutions maintaining the most reactionary, anti-popular and unrepresentative elements in official leading positions. Hence it is not enough to applaud the label of "independence." It is necessary to examine the contents behind the label.

From Egypt to Burma

Egypt has been an "independent" "sovereign" State for twenty-five years; but the conditions for the withdrawal of British troops have not yet been agreed. The negotiations even with the reactionary and unrepresentative Court clique in office have at the moment ended in deadlock precisely because the offer of withdrawal has been made conditional on acceptance of a treaty which would, in fact, continue military overlordship and control of the Sudan. The constitutional plan for India—roundly condemned by every Indian political organisation—is elaborately designed to build up an alliance with the privileged upper-class interests, the Princes, the nawabs at the head of the Moslem League and the big industrialists dominating the Congress machine against the Indian masses, in a complex constitutional structure prolific of deadlocks and ensuring continued British control in practice. The London Conference with Indian leaders in December revealed the subordination of the "Constituent Assembly" to British overriding authority, just as the parliamentary debate revealed from the mouths of Ministers that the plan in no respect departed from the lines already laid down under the Tory Secretary of State, Amery. It was symptomatic that on the same day as the police swooped down on the Indian Communist Party, the announcement was made from New Delhi that an arrangement had been reached for a British company to extract ar export from India to Britain monazite and thorium, raw mate·

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for the production of atomic energy. The present negotiations with a Burmese delegation have only been opened after the attempt to reimpose the old colonial subjection had failed in face of popular revolt; and even these negotiations have only been opened after the splitting of the Burmese national movement by the separation of the older reactionary politicians and a section of the leadership of the Freedom League from the decisive popular forces, the Communists, trade unions and peasant associations which had built up the liberation movement. Above all, throughout these complex negotiations, military occupation—the essential test of foreign domination—has been maintained and even strengthened. And it is here where the requirements of imperialist policy come most vividly and directly in conflict with the requirements of British reconstruction and popular advance at home.

Raids on Indian Communists

The crisis in all the colonial countries is growing. From Burma it is reported that a popular "parallel Government, collecting taxes from the people and maintaining their own police force and courts of law" controls an area of 5,000 square miles (*Times*, January 15, 1947). Most serious recent evidence of the growing crisis in India is the concerted police raids on the headquarters and press of the Indian Communist Party and the homes of its leaders, as well as, according to reports, on trade union, peasant and student organisations in eight principal centres. The alleged pretext for this offensive, supposed to be based on articles published six months ago giving extracts from official documents revealing military preparations for the suppression of an Indian national revolt in the event of failure of the Cabinet Mission negotiations, cannot be regarded as adequate explanation for the attack at this juncture. These documents have been widely republished in the Indian press. *The Times* correspondent openly stated that the real reasons were to be found in the development of the political situation since the formation of the Interim Government in September, and the growth of mass struggles under the leadership of the Communist Party "culminating in last week's serious trouble among Cawnpore millworkers. Clearly some action was due if the rot was to be stopped" (*Times*, *January* 15, 1947). It is significant that Indian Ministers have denied responsibility for the police action. Whatever the role of Indian Ministers, who are in practice no more than an impotent screen for British power, it is clear that we have here a direct assault by the overriding imperialist authorities against the Indian working-class movement, against the vanguard of the Indian fight for freedom, and against that party which most resolutely opposes all communal divisions and stands for the unity of the Indian masses. It is intolerable that such action should be taken in the name of the working-class movement of this country. We remember the Cawnpore trial against Dange and the other leaders of the Indian Communist Party during the first Labour

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Government. We remember the Meerut trial against Indian Communism and trade unionism under the second Labour Government. We do not want to see this record repeated today.

Price of Empire

A situation is developing when it has become urgently necessary that the labour movement in this country should reconsider the present policy which is being pursued in relation to the Empire. Is it in the interests of the people of this country to spend their resources and man-power in holding other countries subject? Time was when the prophets of Empire preached that it brought rich dividends, not only to the bondholders and colonial bureaucracy, but also to the workers of the ruling country, enjoying a higher standard of living and social services unknown to the poverty-stricken and disease-ridden colonial peoples. Already in the years before the war Lancashire and the derelict areas could make some comment on this text. Today the boot is on the other foot; or rather, the jackboot is beginning to pinch the foot that wears it. With the armed services over three times pre-war and draining one-tenth of the national income; with the command of the seas lost; and with an impoverished and debt-ridden economy, the ever more desperate effort still to maintain imperialist domination and commitments over the four quarters of the globe is crippling reconstruction, bleeding man-power, dissipating resources, and bringing the danger to Britain of becoming a financial colony and tied and subsidised dependency of the United States. It is time to change the course and follow a different path.

Socialism and Empire

The time has come when the great issue has to be faced. Britain must either break with imperialism or go under. The ending of foreign domination and military interventionist adventures is not only vital in the interests of world democracy and of the colonial peoples struggling for freedom. It is equally the vital interest of the British people if they are to be free to solve their problems at home and advance to socialism. Socialism and empire are irreconcilable contradictions. If we choose empire, we renounce socialism. More than that. Should the present course be pursued to its conclusion, we would not only be renouncing socialism; we would be signing our economic, political and military ruin. It is time to choose the alternative path, when the British people, in liberating the peoples of the Empire, will also liberate themselves. This is no longer wisdom of an ultimate future. It has become the urgent practical politics of the present. The troops must be brought home. We must use our resources for the tasks of reconstruction at home. Let us cut the losses of an outworn, criminal and bankrupt system of Empire, and build instead a new Britain as a free and equal partner of the free peoples of the world.

January 19, 1947. R. P. T

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EUROPE TO DAY (II)

by R. H. S. Crossman, M.P.

(*Following the article of K. Zilliacus, M.P., which appeared in our January issue, we have pleasure in printing a further contribution from R. H. S. Crossman, M.P., who moved the foreign policy amendment in the debate on the King's Speech.*—Ed. LABOUR MONTHLY).

I am entirely in agreement with Zilliacus' analysis, in his article "Europe Today," of the problem which faces us. It is futile to speak as though the only alternative in Europe were either Communism or Western Democracy and to base our policy on the assumption that one or other of these ideologies must prevail. I would add that a very similar analysis could be made of the conditions in the Middle East. Here again British policy seems to be based on the false assumption that the alternatives are either Anglo-American "democratic" control or "Communist" control.

I also agree with Zilliacus that any critic of the Government's policy who suggests that there is one clear-cut social-democratic "middle way" is also over simplifying. Really there is a spectrum shading from deep red to pale pink, and the common factor is the Socialist control of production.

In my view the acid test of British policy is Anglo-French relations. For many months they have been not bad, but almost non-existent. This is not simply due to the instability of French Governments but to a British preoccupation with America which has isolated us from Europe.

The French Communists have become *the* party of the French working-class. As a Socialist I regret this. But it is no use denying plain facts. There is a deadlock because the Communists are not able to enforce their own foreign policy, but they are able to prevent any French Government from making France a member of a Western Bloc.

We must break this deadlock and reach an agreement with France, including the French Communists, for Anglo-French co-operation in Europe and Africa. At the Moscow Conference Britain and France should jointly speak for Europe to the two non-European Great Powers.

We are told that a war between Britain and America is inconceivable. It is equally true that a war between France and the U.S.S.R. is inconceivable. That is why an Anglo-French agreement would stop the drift into ideological blocs. The first subject to be tackled would, of course, be Germany.

Such an agreement would not be easy to achieve, but this is no reason why we should not try to achieve it even if this means co-operating with the French Communists. We have got to get used to it some time—and the sooner the better.

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One last word. Our two objectives during the next ten years, when a major war is still most unlikely, must be to put U.N.O. on a firm foundation and to build Socialism in this country. To do this is impossible without: (1) a drastic reduction in the size of our forces; and (2) measures to insulate ourselves from the effects of the American slump. But we can do neither of these two things in a world divided into two hostile blocs and as long as we are isolated from Europe. So once again the answer is that we must work for an Anglo-French agreement.

THE AGRICULTURAL BILL

by Wogan Philipps

THE first thing that strikes one in studying the Labour Government's new Agricultural Bill is that it contains no new policy for British agriculture. The opening introductory words tell us this frankly: its object is " to promote a *stable* and *efficient* industry, capable of producing that part of the nation's food *thought desirable* in the U.K." In other words, the Bill is to improve the present framework of the industry, and an attempt to make farming more efficient under the present system.

The complete lack of a long term policy shows us that the Cabinet is leading us into a very dangerous situation, for the Government must still believe in the old capitalist Tory policy of buying as much cheap food as possible from abroad and stabilising British agriculture to merely fill up the gap. What is more, it must still believe this is possible. First of all, it seems to ignore the fact that we cannot pay for large imports of food. Secondly, there may not be an unlimited supply of cheap food, because farming conditions have altered, prices have risen, and the Americans and other countries have realised that they cannot continue viciously to exploit their soil for the export market as they did in the past. Thirdly, the people all over the world are advancing, and are determined to obtain more food of a better standard for their own people, and will therefore be new competing markets for the countries growing surplus food.

Moreover, the policy of stability envisaged in the introduction of this Bill shows not only that the Government is not facing up to the reality of the present situation of this country, but that they also have not grasped one of the chief essentials for the advance of socialism in Britain—that we must exploit our natural resources to the full, and that our agricultural soil—like our rich coal deposits—is one of our greatest natural sources of wealth. A true socialist economy must be based on our rural areas as well as our towns producing to the maximum. It is true that the Bill tells us that the Government means to take over tracts of land such as Romney Marsh and develop them, but this is a mere drop in the ocean

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there is no inspiration for farmers as a whole to produce the maximum amount of food for the people of this country.

The inducement to farmers to grow the essential foods will continue to be good prices, fixed in advance. This scheme has been in operation since 1939 and has led to a large increase in food production during the war, yet this was far below what this country could have produced, and since 1944 production of wheat, our main import, has dropped by half, and our tillage acreage has declined enormously. Moreover, this policy of inducement by prices alone does nothing to convince and educate farmers to the vital importance of maximum production of human food, and does not give them a sense of responsibility. Good prices will not produce the patriotic spirit of urgency such as exists in the coal fields today under nationalisation.

The chief emphasis of the Bill is on efficiency, which is certainly very important. But for the industry to be efficient it has been estimated that from £500 to £1,000 millions are needed to bring buildings and fixed equipment up to date. Where is this vast sum to come from? The State as landlord under land nationalisation is the only answer, but recently, when pressed, the Minister could only mention the Land Mortgage Corporation, but this has only £40 million left available! The Bill does not tackle this problem at all. According to the official National Farm Survey of England and Wales, published in 1946, under 40 per cent. of the total holdings have good buildings, only 37 per cent. have piped water laid on to farm buildings; only 16 per cent. have piped water on to any field at all, and 13 per cent. have no *source of water at all on any field*! Under the Bill owners and landlords are to be given directions for the provision and repair of fixed equipment, and if they do not carry them out the Minister has the power to do them himself and recover the costs. But it is certain the owners and occupiers cannot find the hundreds of millions of pounds needed, and there is no provision in the Bill for very cheap loans to enable them to do so. If they fail they are finally to be dispossessed, which will be very hard indeed on the thousands of small owners who lack capital. The obvious result will be that they will be squeezed out of the industry altogether.

This lays bare one of the great failings of the Bill. It does not recognise that the industry is made up of a minority of big, highly mechanised, farmers, with plenty of capital, who have made large profits out of existing prices, and a large majority (73 per cent.) of small farmers who farm a hundred acres or less, who have not got modern machinery, and much, if any capital, and who have only just managed to make ends meet and perhaps pay off a little of their overdrafts during the war. These latter are going to be in a very difficult position under this drive for efficiency. By modern mechanised standards they are not so efficient as the big farms with all their resources, and the danger is therefore that through no fault of

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their own they will be picked on, penalised, and finally be driven out, their holdings swallowed up by the big owners. The nation, of course, demands and expects efficiency from all farmers, and for the Government to insist on it is good, but it must help the small farmers without resources to become efficient by offering them special means, cheap loans, supplies of machinery designed for small units, easier access to the machines already existing in the county committee and other contractor's depots. Special facilities should be given them for buying their supplies of seeds and fertilisers. Only by nationalisation of the land and a really socialist economy will their difficulties finally be solved, but meanwhile everything should be done to help them in their struggle to be efficient.

A very important section of the Bill is that dealing with the relationship of landlord and tenant. For the majority of the farmers in England and Wales are tenant farmers, or 65 per cent. of those farming 5 acres or more, and up till the war none of these had any security of tenure, which in itself was a great deterrent to progressive farming and efficient planning. Under the new Bill the tenant can object to notice to quit, and the landlord has to get the consent of the ministry before he can turn him out. The Minister's consent will only be given if the change will bring about greater efficiency, which again can mean that because the new would-be tenant is a richer man and can bring in more capital he is quite likely to get the farm. An appeal can be made against the Minister's decision to the Agricultural Land Tribunal.

On quitting the holding a tenant will now be able to claim for long-term improvements he has carried out, such as water, buildings, electricity, if the landlord has agreed to these improvements being done. If the landlord did not agree to the improvements the tenant can appeal to the ministry, and if the ministry gives its approval they rank for compensation. Thus compensation will be based on the increased value of a holding due to improvements instead of the present system based on the present value to an incoming tenant.

The tenant can also claim for medium-term improvements done without the prior consent of the landlord, such as liming, mole drainage, etc. In fact, the aim of the Bill is to make a standard legal method of calculation for compensation, instead of the present haphazard one.

Meanwhile a landlord can claim against an outgoing tenant for dilapidations or neglect of husbandry. He can raise the rent if he has improved the holding by supplying new fixed equipment such as buildings or water. Moreover, the tenant or landlord can get the rent fixed by arbitration, but once it is fixed it cannot be changed for at least three years.

From this it is seen that the Labour Government still admits the importance of private landlords in the agricultural industry, althou they will have to be more efficient, and some of their arbitrary po

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over a tenant are curtailed. And there is a real concession to landlords in a clause which says they can give notice to quit if they wish to farm the land themselves or through a child or grandchild, the only condition being that they acquired the land before March, 1947!

The section dealing with small holdings is based on a true alteration of policy. In the past small holdings were primarily to solve a social problem—to find a living for ex-service men, etc. Now the emphasis is to be on farming, and agricultural experience will be absolutely necessary, farm workers having first consideration. The local councils will be responsible for administration, but the Minister will assume powers of supervision and control. The holdings will have to be on good land, but before the councils take the land the Minister will have to see that doing so does not jeopardise farming in general. All small holdings will be for let, and not sale, and the Minister will be empowered to make loans at reasonable rates of interest subject to a maximum of 75 per cent. of the estimated working capital needed. Co-operative smallholding schemes, including machinery pools, can be launched by the authorities with the Minister's consent, and they can also undertake the central marketing of the produce. If the local authority fails in its duties the Minister can take over its functions.

The administrative machinery to be set up needs very careful study. The present County Agricultural Executive Committees are to be made permanent, and since they are to do all the directing, supervising, and efficiency drive for the ministry, it is absolutely essential that they are more democratically constituted, with better representation from small farmers and workers. At present they consist of big farmers and landlords, with usually only one spokesman for the workers.

An Agricultural Land Commission is to be formed to manage the land vested in the Minister, such as that acquired because of the inefficiency of the owner, and certain areas which cannot be properly brought under cultivation by private owners, such as Romney Marsh. It will consist of five members only, for whom no specific qualifications are laid down.

The Agricultural Land Tribunals, whose decisions in all cases are to be final, are to consist of an independent legal chairman, appointed by the Chancellor, with a farmer and landowner appointed by the Minister from nominations by farmers and landlords. There will also be two independent assessors with professional agricultural qualifications.

Lastly, there are to be Agricultural Statistics Advisory Committees representing all sides of the industry, required for fixing prices, etc.

The core of the Bill is a drive for greater efficiency under the existing system of land tenure, and this may act very unfairly to the small farmers, as has been shown above. With prices fixed ahead

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large farmers certainly can have a more secure outlook. This may bring about the investment of more outside capital into the industry, and hasten the full development of capitalist agriculture, causing it to concentrate in the hands of fewer and fewer big men. If this is the future tendency the Bill certainly does nothing to protect the small farmers from losing their livelihood. Their only hope will be in closer and closer co-operation, rendered difficult because usually small farms do not lie in groups adjoining each other. The plight of the small farmers must be brought to light and their cause fought for.

There are many omissions from the Bill. It does not mention or face the question of marketing and distribution, in order to reduce the price of food to the consumer and make available millions of pounds for higher wages. And horticulture is also omitted altogether.

And finally, any number of revolutionary plans can be made to help the farmers to efficiency, but unless sufficient workers are attracted into the industry, through more and better houses, the abolishing of the tied cottages, better social amenities in our villages, and, above all, a decent basic wage, agriculture still will not flourish and play its part in our economy. It will not even remain stabilised, and the Labour Government's hopes for reconstruction will founder.

A TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES

by William Gallacher, M.P.

ON September 14 my wife and I set out for a trip to the United States. I had almost given up hope of getting a visa, was, in fact, on the point of cancelling the booking, when the visa came through. It was a pleasant sail across, although somewhat cold, and my wife was looking forward to sailing up the Hudson and seeing the much talked of Statue of Liberty. But the strike on the New York docks forced us to make Halifax as our port of destination.

We arrived in Halifax about mid-day on Wednesday, September 18. After lunch, which finished about 2 o'clock, we lined in the alleyway leading to the music room, for the purpose of passing the American immigration authorities, who had come aboard when we docked. After standing in the queue for an hour Rhys Davis, M.P., who was a fellow-passenger, said to my wife, "It's disgraceful that important people like your husband and myself should have to stand in a queue like this."

On our first Sunday in New York we crossed over to Harrison, New Jersey, to see a cousin of mine, whom I hadn't seen for over thirty years. He did not recognise me, in fact didn't bother much about me, he was taken up with Jean. After talking to her for quite a while and just for the sake of being civil, he asked me what I was do' now. " Have you never heard anything about me?" I asked

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''Not a word,'' he replied. ''I never hear from anyone.'' ''Haven't you heard that I'm a Member of Parliament?'' I tried again. ''No,'' he answered, and then went on talking to Jean. Not once did he refer to my occupation after that. Not a question. Not the least interest. So much for the ''important people.''

But, important or no, it was nine o'clock at night when Jean and I got through the immigration officials, and Rhys Davis was still waiting when we passed out. There was much bitter, caustic comment among those weary passengers about American efficiency.

At midnight we boarded a train for Montreal, where we arrived on Friday morning about 9 o'clock. Tim Buck and other comrades were waiting there to give us a handshake and a welcome. But we had little time together, as we had to get to another platform and join a train for New York which left at ten o'clock. More American efficiency—what a train! Old, dirty carriages. It was the Boston main line and it was awful. Hard seats, and with the heat (for it was very warm in Canada, very hot for us) the windows were open and dust was blowing in like a sandstorm. Not a wash-hand basin on the train. During the journey my wife licked her dry lips, then she looked in her mirror, ''My God,'' she exclaimed, ''I'm like Al Jolson.'' I went back along the train and saw Rhys Davis. He was burning with indignation, not without reason. He told me he had written a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* and that he had sent a copy to Attlee and a copy to Truman. Before the journey was completed a letter was handed to each of the passengers from the Cunard company apologising for the inconvenience and hardship of the journey. All the best trains, it said, were being used to take delegates to the Veterans' Conference in San Francisco, and what we got was the best the railway company could do on short notice.

But there was a compensation: the wonderful scenery through New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut, like a long stretch of the highland hills, rolling away as far as the eye could see. But the colours—I've never seen anything like it. The hills were covered with maple trees, and maple trees in the Fall are a wonder to behold. No hue of the rainbow but it was there. Dark red, bright red, orange, yellow, dark brown, light brown, green of all shades, and all of them so beautifully blended. My wife, despite the dirt and discomfort, was entranced by those wondrous colours.

We were due in New York at 10.30 p.m., but we did not get in till Saturday morning at 1.30. My nephew, whom I had seen last over here as a chaplain in the American Air Force, met us at the station and got us to the hotel where reservations had been made by the Cunard company. What a relief! A really commodious, well-appointed room, with lovely bathroom attached. Listen to the roar and rush of piping hot water, then the rubbing and the splashing, and think of us, our woes and our importance or unimportance

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forgotten, lying back with a sigh of deep content, to woo our old friend Morpheus.

To Pittsburgh

On Sunday we went to Pittsburgh, where my nephew's wife and his father-in-law picked us up and ran us out to a small suburban town named "Mars." Not the turbulent fellow that is always throwing nations at one another's throats. No, a very quiet little country town. Well, it should have been quiet, but unfortunately most of the trains passing out of Pittsburgh came right through the centre of the town, and as there were a series of street crossings, the whistle sounded even louder, certainly shriller, than the thunder of the trains. When we got into the house, one came roaring along. The house shook. Our eyes nearly jumped out of our heads. "It's all right," said my nephew's young wife, "they never come through the house." That was a consolation. After a very pleasant two days' sojourn, despite the prancing of the iron horse, we continued our journey to Chicago, where we spent a very happy ten days with my sister and other members of my family.

Chicago Revisited

Thirty-two years before I had been in Chicago. I saw many changes, some good and some not so good: new buildings, a great new motor highway, reclamation of the Lake foreshore; but along many of the streets litter lying in heaps—the worst spectacle of neglect I have seen in any city, here or there. There is so much graft there doesn't appear to be any money left to pay street cleaners. I arranged for a talk with the Party comrades. Then I set out to try and locate some of my old fellow-members of the old Socialist Party of America, in particular Charlie Hurbat, a member of the Plumbers' Union. I went around to "Bughouse" Square (Washington Square), a sort of Hyde Park on a very small scale. All the benches were occupied by "flotsam and jetsam" but not a "kenned face" among them. After trying various ways of locating Charlie, I thought of the Plumbers' Union. I went there, got his address and off I went to find him. He nearly jumped out of his boots when he saw me. We arranged to meet on the Thursday evening.

I then got into touch with another very dear old friend, H. S. Burnette of Zion City, who, although he was far from well, came in the twenty miles to Chicago to be there at the reunion. We met, quite a group of us, including another old-timer, Kendricks, at Chicago Avenue and Clark Street, just a hop, skip and a jump from "Bughouse" Square. Charlie led us up to the Square, my brother-in-law was with me. He got one big surprise, when Charlie, stepping into the middle of the Square, let out a shout, "Attention, introducing Willie Gallacher, an old pal from the other side and an old orator in 'Bughouse' Square." I had to shake hands all round and tell them all sorts of things about conditions over here. The grou then adjourned to a near-by cafe, where we had apple pie

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coffee, after which I had to take my leave of them, with very much regret, and make my way to the reception. Jean and my sister were waiting there when my brother-in-law and I arrived.

We went in and got a warm welcome from the Party comrades. After moving round about talking to one and another, I went up to the platform with the Chairman, and, being formally introduced, started to address the gathering. I looked down the hall to where Jean was sitting, and lo, there was Charlie sitting at her side and whispering away as though he had known her all his life. Good old Charlie! But I missed my old pal "The Deacon." I was unable to locate him or to find out for certain if he was alive or dead.

The City of Automobiles

From the Windy City to the City of Automobiles, through rich agricultural land, the main crop of which appeared to be sweet corn (corn-in-the-cob). Detroit! What a city! Great spacious thoroughfares, but everywhere cars, cars of all kinds and conditions, cars of all ages. The whole of Detroit appears to be a "Parking Lot." Thousands of cars lie in the side streets all night, summer or winter. Our hostess owned a car of somewhat ancient vintage, but she could make it go and we fairly buzzed around Detroit. But she told us in the winter months she had often, in the morning, to dig it out of the snow.

It's Ford's City, if you are inclined to believe Ford's Yes-men (and they are plentiful). In fact, if you went by what Ford himself sometimes says, you would think that he had actually brought Detroit into existence. But I, who had been in Detroit over thirty years ago, knew that it was a flourishing city before the mechanical Mogul came on the scene. He "came to a city," and while he built up great industries, he didn't build up any high standard of probity. With hundreds of gunmen he kept the workers under constant surveillance and ruthlessly dealt with any who had the temerity to talk union. Naturally, in such conditions, with every species of "hoodlum" on the works administration, the same unsavoury subjects were encouraged to participate in the city administration. Graft, next to automobiles, became the principal industry of Detroit. The "political party" that controlled the administration was simply a gang, with big shots, small shots and smaller shots, and a whole bunch of brutal sluggers to deal with any troublesome citizens who didn't like the way things were being run. But "the world does move," and even though there are Fundamentalists in America who insist that the earth is flat and steadfast, they couldn't keep Detroit fixed and immovable for Henry Ford.

In Edinburgh forty years ago a young lad was brooding over the evils of capitalist exploitation, and finding in a study of Marx the means whereby these evils and the system that gave rise to them could be finally obliterated from the face of the earth. I met him there in Edinburgh one Sunday when I went through to that aristo-

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cratic centre to do a propaganda meeting. He took the chair for me, and I was struck by the intensity of his feeling. Bill McKie had his heart in the great cause of Socialism.

Thirty years later I met him in Windsor, a Canadian city on the other side of the river from Detroit. As I couldn't at that time get into America he and a group of workers from Ford's factory, where Bill was employed, came over to see me. They were fighting for the right to establish a trade union movement in the Ford factories, and they were having a terrible time of it. It was all "underground" work. Wherever an advocate of trade unionism was discovered, out he went. Lucky if he got off without being well and truly beaten up. We had a long discussion on methods of work under such conditions. They felt that I could help them with advice, and I tried my best to do so. They went back quite bucked up with the meeting, and kept at the job. Now, ten years later, they have the largest union of automobile workers in the States.

Local Automobile Workers Union 600 (that is the name of it) has seventy thousand members and is one of the most active affiliates of the Congress of Industrial Organisations. It, with other organisations, is doing all that is possible to clean up Detroit. That isn't easy, but it is worth noting that two years ago the Mayor and twenty members of his administration got thrown into the "Can" for graft amounting to somewhere around a million dollars. At the headquarters of Local 600 I met the officials of the Union, and answered all kinds of questions about the situation over here. It was a different kind of meeting from the one in Windsor ten years before, but I couldn't help feeling as I talked with them that I had been, even though in a small indirect way, in at the birth of their Union.

Across to Toronto

From Detroit, via Buffalo, we made our way to Toronto, where we went into a huddle with the leading comrades of the Canadian party, minus Tim Buck, who was in Montreal. It was a real pleasure to learn that the espionage campaign of the Canadian Government, so loudly trumpeted by the Canadian press, hadn't caught on with the Canadian workers. Of course the Party was hit pretty hard. Their only M.P. was thrown into prison on a charge based on an old and practically obsolete Conspiracy Act, while other leading members are continually beset and harried. But the Party is getting over the initial difficulties and is now making quite considerable headway with its various campaigns.

We were interested to hear a report of a Trades and Labour Congress in Canada. The unions making up the Congress are affiliated to the American Federation of Labour. One of the top leaders of the A.F.L., Matthew Woll, was in attendance as fraternal delegate. He had just come from the A.F.L. Congress, which had been held in Chicago. At that Congress Mr. Tom O'Brien was the fraternal delegate from the British Trade Union Congress. Mr.

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O'Brien was supposed to persuade the Congress to join the World Trade Union Organisation. He spent most of his time denouncing the Communists, and told the delegates that the Labour Party in Britain wouldn't have any association of any kind with the Communists. He ended up by inviting the Congress to join the World Trade Union Organisation. Green, top leader with Woll, laughed at him and said, in effect, "What's the matter with you; are you nuts? You tell us that the Communists are so bad the Labour leaders won't sit with them; then you ask us to sit with them." The Trade Union Congress should make a better choice of delegate.

But Matthew Woll found a different atmosphere in Canada. The Canadian Congress, asserting its independence, declared for affiliation to the World Federation of Trade Unions. It also passed a resolution protesting against the arbitrary manner of the arrests in connection with the espionage charges and demanded legislation to protect the rights of citizens. It refused by an absolutely overwhelming majority to pass a resolution discriminating against the Communists. No, it wasn't a good atmosphere for Mr. Woll. So he showed great care in his fraternal address. But he made one mistake, and it was a bad one. He accused Britain of using "slave" labour (German prisoners). We were employing some thousands. France also was at it—more thousands; but Russia—millions of them. Well, that might have slipped by, only there was a Britisher on the platform, Mr. Jarman of the National Union of Seamen. When he was called on to speak he hotly repudiated the allegation that slave labour was employed in Britain. "I throw the lie back in his teeth," he exclaimed, turning towards Woll. The delegates gave Jarman the greatest ovation of the Congress. It was a bad day for Mr. Woll.

New York

Back to New York, with a week to go before sailing. A busy week. The comrades had worked out a schedule, and they kept us at it. Outstanding was a great meeting in Manhattan Centre. Great in the spirit that it manifested. Madison Square Gardens was not available—the Rodeo was there; so the next best was Manhattan Centre, which holds 3.500. Tickets were distributed to branches for the active members of the Party. Before I spoke a presentation of books was made to the party comrades who had a high recruiting record. Then came another presentation—to my wife. The women comrades presented her with a beautiful handbag and two huge baskets of lovely flowers, very effectively dressed with bright red ribbon on which was the greeting "Welcome to America." My wife was very pleased. A coloured comrade, Councillor Davis, who is on the New York Council, offered me the keys of the City.

The Party in America has had a hard and difficult road to travel. Torn almost to pieces during 1927 and 1928 by the gangster methods of Lovestone and his associates, it had just made a recovery

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from those evil days when the Browder trouble started. However. Bill Foster and Eugene Dennis, the chairman and secretary, have a fine group of comrades around them in the leadership of the Party, and despite the threats of persecution, and even the likelihood of persecution from the vicious reactionaries now in control in America, the Party will battle through to better days for the progressive forces and for the people of America.

We visited the Seamen's Union Headquarters where, when we arrived, a great mass meeting was going on, getting a report of the successful termination of a "walk-out," and there was nothing for it, I had to address the meeting. At the Furriers' Union it was the same. A mass meeting was in progress, and in view of the fact that this is a Jewish union, I was asked to speak particularly on Palestine.

Later on we paid a visit to Harlem, where we met that great singer and great fighter for his people, Paul Robeson. We had a wonderful time with the negro comrades in Harlem, a visit to Joe Louis's restaurant being part of it. A great mass meeting of the coloured folks of New York was suggested. I would have liked that. They are poor, these Negro workers, many of them very poor, but they are splendid proletarians, despite their terrible oppression. They are the salt of the earth. Our final visit was to the Jefferson School with my old comrade Trachtenberg, who for the past twenty years has been in charge of publications in New York. The Jefferson School, in its own building, twelve stories high, carries on very far-reaching educational activities. The Director, victimised in one of the universities for being a "red," has built up a splendid body of tutors, and the classes are all filled to capacity. We had lunch with the staff and some of the students, and then, instead of a talk from me, a somewhat informal conversation took place, which was helpful to me and, I hope, equally helpful to them.

But however happy a vacation may be, the time must come to end it. So we got to Friday, October 25, and our farewells had to be made with all our friends. Once again the women comrades were to the fore with more presents for Jean. Then off to the boat, and so goodbye to New York and comrades who spared neither time, effort nor money to make our visit an unforgettable event in both our lives.

The contact with our brother Party in America was of the utmost value. Our comrades there have a hard job ahead of them. Ours isn't too easy, but, working together in ever-increasing comradeship, we can help to save the world from the disaster that the Anglo-American alliance threatens.

We can make between us an alliance of the workers and progressive forces which, co-operating with the Soviet Union and the democratic states of Europe, will open a new road, a road of peace and prosperity for the people of the world.

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THE GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

(Features of the Home and Foreign Policy of the Capitalist Countries during the Epoch of the General Crisis of Capitalism)

by E. Varga

(Continuation from January issue)

AS is known, the Communist parties of Europe won great popularity as a result of the leading role they played in organising the resistance movements in all the European countries.

"The growth of the influence of the Communists," declared Stalin in his interview with a *Pravda* correspondent on Churchill's speech, "cannot be regarded as an accident."

It is sufficient merely to recall the figures of the latest post-war elections in the European countries to be convinced of the tremendous growth of influence of the Communist parties in Europe. In France the Communist Party is practically the largest political party in the country: at the elections on October 21, 1945, and June 2, 1946, it obtained more than five million votes. In Italy, the Communist Party has a membership of two million and is one of the leading political parties in the country. The influence of the Communists has grown considerably also in such countries as Holland, Belgium, Norway, Luxembourg. In Czechoslovakia the Communists obtained about 2.7 million votes and have become the strongest party in the country. In Hungary about 800,000 people voted for the Communist Party. In almost all the countries of the European continent Communists are taking part in the government and are playing a leading role in restoring the economy of their countries. Finally, Communist parties have achieved outstanding successes in Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, where they are the leading force in the Popular and Fatherland fronts.

In all the countries which were subjected to Hitlerite occupation and where the big bourgeoisie collaborated with the invaders, the resistance movement against the invaders was inevitably also a movement against the big bourgeoisie of the country concerned. The Communists gained their successes as a result of the policy which their parties are now pursuing in all countries on the basis of the experience of the first world war. The Communist parties defend the interests of all the working people—workers, office employees, peasants and intelligentsia. This policy makes impossible the old tactics of reaction—the isolation of the Communists from the working people.

The second new factor distinguishing the present situation from that created after the first world war is the radical change in the position and role of the Soviet Union in world politics. The growth

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of the influence and prestige of the U.S.S.R. as a world power has had to be recognised even by the enemies of the Soviet Union.

After the end of the second world war the main line in the home and foreign policy of the capitalist countries is once more, as after the first world war, the defence of the capitalist system.

It should be mentioned that Great Britain followed this line during the war itself. Thus, for example, reactionary emigrant bourgeois governments found asylum in Britain. Preparations were carried on to ensure that after the liberation of the countries in question they would be able to return to their countries as the lawful bourgeois rulers.

After the liberation of a number of Western European countries, the question was raised of disarming the guerillas and of excluding, as far as possible, the leaders of the resistance movement from the newly-formed governments. Of course, it is far more difficult now than it was after the first world war to come forward in open defence of the capitalist system in the form in which it existed before the war. In America, it is true, there are influential persons and groups, like Johnson, Senator Vandenberg and the circles supporting them, who call for the return to pre-war capitalism. But there are exceptions. In the main, it is everywhere admitted that a profound reform of the capitalist system is necessary; everywhere ideological trends are to be found, such as the striving for a planned economy under capitalism, the introduction of social insurance, the strengthening of State capitalism, etc.

In Britain, as is known, certain important branches of industry are being nationalised. The fact that the bourgeoisie itself is compelled to begin nationalisation of the means of production is, in itself, an admission that the system of private ownership of the means of production is obsolete. There is, of course, a vast difference, between nationalisation in Great Britain and nationalisation in those countries of Eastern Europe which may be called countries with a democracy of a new type. In these countries, feudal survivals in the form of large-scale land ownership have been abolished, a considerable part of the means of production has become State property and the State itself is not an apparatus of the rich for suppressing the working people, but operates in the interests of the latter.

In the countries of the old type of democracy, for example, in Great Britain, nationalisation does not alter the distribution of the national wealth and national income, because the owners receive compensation approximately equivalent to their former incomes. In the countries with a new type of democracy, on the other hand, nationalisation means a profound change in the distribution of the national income at the expense of the former owners of the nationalised means of production.

By what methods is the struggle being waged now to preserve the capitalist system, in the first place in Europe?

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Firstly, attempts are being made to strengthen reformism in the labour movement, to convert once again the Social-Democratic Party and the reformist labour movement in Germany, Hungary, Italy and France into the main social bulwark of the bourgeoisie.

In the European countries, an intense struggle to win the Social-Democratic movement is developing between the progressive and reactionary forces. This constitutes the chief content of the domestic policy of the capitalist countries. At the same time, of course, this struggle goes on inside every social-democratic party, between the right and left wings, between the social-democratic working masses, who are much more inclined to march together with the Communists, and the reformist leaders of the Social-Democratic parties, who are endeavouring to revive Social-Democracy in its former, pre-war form.

This struggle can best be followed from the example of Germany. A considerable part of social-democracy has broken with the former policy of its party and called for unity with the Communists. On April 21-22, 1946, a unity congress of the Social-Democratic and Communist Parties of Germany took place, at which a united party of the working-class was formed—the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. A large majority of the Social-Democrats in the Soviet-occupied zone were in favour of the amalgamation of the two workers' parties. Despite the counter efforts of the British and American occupation authorities, the union of the Social-Democrats and Communists in the Soviet-occupied zone met with a warm response also in Western Germany.

The emergence of a united party of the working-class in Germany is a serious blow to the reformist movement. It is natural, therefore, that all the reactionary elements are up in arms against the new party. Ruling circles in Britain and the U.S.A. immediately came out against the unification of Communists and Social-Democrats and are now giving decisive support to the group of reactionary social-democratic leaders headed by Schumacher, who are trying to revive the old reformist Social-Democracy in the Western zones of Germany for defence of the capitalist system of society.

It is characteristic that the Schumacher group has been joined by the majority of the old compromised leaders of Social-Democracy, such as Severing, Noske, Paul Loebe, etc., who are tried and tested defenders of the bourgeoisie. The British press openly calls for reliance on this wing of Social-Democracy.

Undoubtedly, the further internal political development of the capitalist countries to a considerable degree depends on the outcome of this struggle to win over Social-Democracy and on the struggle within Social-Democracy.

The second line defence of capitalism lies in increasing the influence of religion, of the church. The Catholic Church, headed by the Pope, is creating something in the nature of a "Catholic Inter-

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national.'' The Vatican recently appointed as Cardinals thirty-two prominent Catholics of various countries in order to increase its influence in those countries. The same effort is characteristic also of the Protestant Church. Definite attempts are made to use the Moslem Church as a means of political struggle. The clearest expression of this is seen in India.

Most peculiar tactics are adhered to by the bourgeoisie.

In those European countries where the extreme Right-wing reactionary parties are prohibited, the bourgeoisie employs very special tactics. In those countries the bourgeoisie tries to influence the most Right-wing of the permitted Left parties and to get into its hands the leadership of these parties and to obtain a majority for them in the country. A classic example of these tactics is the behaviour of reaction during the recent elections in Hungary. The closest to the Right of the Left parties in Hungary is the Smallholders Party. It was found, after the elections, that this party had obtained the majority of the votes in Budapest, in districts where there is not a single bit of land suitable for cultivation. The whole bourgeoisie and those elements which still follow the bourgeoisie voted for it.

Capitalism's third line defence, which so far is manifested still in a very veiled form, is encouragement of the fascist movement. If it is true that fascism is the political expression of the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism, it is to be expected that fascism will be revived. Lenin pointed out that the domination of monopoly capitalism inevitably engenders reaction. In his article entitled ''On a caricature of Marxism,'' he wrote: ''The political superstructure of the new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is a swing from democracy to reaction. Free competition is accompanied by democracy. Monopoly is accompanied by political reaction.''

In the capitalist countries at the present time a certain revival of political reaction and fascism is undoubtedly taking place. There are also fascist countries, such as Spain and Portugal. In addition, there is an illegal fascist movement in countries where fascism formerly ruled: Germany, Italy, Hungary, etc.

But there are undoubtedly signs of the revival of the fascist movement in the democratic countries also. Evidence of this is the activity of the fascist party in Britain, the Ku Klux Klan and other fascist groups in America, etc. In Greece, where the British virtually control policy, after dozens of changes of government Royalist reactionaries have finally been established in power; objectively and subjectively they differ little from fascists.

Of course, in the countries with a new type of democracy the revival of fascism is made very difficult because agrarian reform has done away with the landowning class and because nationalisation of the basic means of production has undermined the economic power of the big bourgeoisie. If we add to this the fact that State

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power in these countries is in the hands of progressive forces, it becomes clear that the revival of fascism there is made extremely difficult.

As always, the domestic policy of the capitalist countries at the present stage is closely interwoven with the foreign policy.

The methods of struggle against the Soviet Union at the present time differ, of course, from those employed after the first World War. "Intervention" in the old sense is impossible. But the reactionary forces of the different countries are conducting an intensified campaign against the Soviet Union, and are endeavouring to isolate her and build up an anti-Soviet bloc.

In his statement on May 27, 1946, Molotov pointed to certain extremely characteristic tendencies in British and American post-war policy which had been shown during the preparation of the peace treaties. Molotov repulsed the attempts of the reactionary forces to belittle the importance of the Soviet Union and to minimise its role in the post-war world.

Very typical of the policy of the bourgeoisie is the way British reaction uses the Right wing of Social-Democracy in Europe for the struggle against the U.S.S.R. Naturally, the Labour Party and the Labour Government are the most suitable for using this wing of Social-Democracy to achieve the foreign-political aims of the British bourgeoisie. In this respect, the existence of a Labour Government is more advantageous to the British bourgeoisie than a Conservative Government would be. To this must be added that, whereas supporters of the Labour Party sometimes came out against the foreign policy of the Conservative Government, and thus there existed a potential opposition to this policy, the Conservative Party has no grounds for opposing Bevin's foreign policy. Of course, the British workers do not approve of this reactionary policy of Bevin and the Labour Government. This dissatisfaction finds expression in the opposition to Bevin's policy within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Today also, the struggle between two systems is not the sole expression of the foreign policy of the capitalist countries. Imperialist contradictions between the big capitalist countries, in the first place between Britain and America, are reviving, despite the fact that on a number of international issues these Powers form a common diplomatic bloc. The British-American contradictions, which were the basic contradictions of the capitalist world before the second World War, or, rather, before German fascist aggression became a menace to both Britain and America, have since the defeat of Germany once again become the decisive contradictions within the capitalist world. American policy strives now first and foremost to smash the British colonial empire and to win equal conditions for American capital in the competitive struggle throughout the world. This is its chief aim.

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The striving to put an end to the British, French and Dutch Empires shows itself in a great variety of forms. During the war one manifestation of this was the draft British-American Alliance, the proposal for joint tutelage over colonies, etc. Sometimes this striving even assumes ludicrous forms. For example, an American publicist recently wrote a book in which he sharply criticised British, French and Dutch colonial policy. After such a criticism one might have thought that he would propose that the colonial peoples should be given their independence. Instead, however, the author declares that the colonial peoples are not yet ripe for independence and proposed that all of them should themselves select their guardians, but should not have the right to select as their guardian the imperialist Power which rules them at the present time, i.e., the British colonies may not select Britain as their guardian. The author assumes that they will all most certainly choose the Americans, because the latter, he thinks, behave so well towards colonies and can ensure their prosperity.

The movement against the colonial regime has become stronger. An important factor in this is that the British, French and Dutch have lost their prestige in the colonial countries; the colonial peoples no longer feel their former fear of them. The colonial peoples took part in armed struggle side by side with the troops of some imperialist countries against other countries; they witnessed the defeat and capture of American, British and Dutch soldiers.

Economic causes also exert an influence in strengthening the anti-imperialist movement. During the war some of the colonies grew very strong economically; some colonial countries became financially independent of Britain and themselves became creditors of her. It goes without saying that public opinion in the Soviet Union is in favour of satisfying the just demands of the colonial peoples.

The plan for a Western bloc is also connected with the colonial problem. A Western bloc which would unite Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Portugal and perhaps some of the Scandinavian countries in one political alliance is directed first and foremost against the Soviet Union and represents an attempt to revive the notorious *cordon sanitaire*, only not now on the frontiers of the Soviet Union, where it is politically impossible, owing to the existence of friendly neighbouring countries, but in Western Europe.

But another aspect of this Western bloc should be borne in mind. A Western bloc comprising Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Portugal would unite 95 per cent. of the colonies of the world. Its creation would be an attempt to defend the colonies against the endeavour of the U.S.A. to smash the old colonial regime and assimilate these territories economically, and also an attempt to strengthen resistance to the national liberation movement in the colonies.

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Naturally, within the limits of this article it is only possible to state the most fundamental lines of domestic and foreign policy during the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism. A full elaboration of this theme, and especially of the political consequences of the second World War, is a task requiring a series of special studies.

Book Reviews

A Maturer View on the U.S.S.R.

PROFESSOR CARR'S new book* represents the substance of six lectures delivered in Oxford a year ago. It discusses the problems created for capitalist countries, and particularly Great Britain, by the successful survival and continued progress of the U.S.S.R. When he treats of "the political impact," he means the contrast between the socialist democracy of the Soviet Union and capitalist democracy in a few other countries. In discussing "the economic impact," he gives an explanation of Soviet planning and enquires whether capitalist economy can move in the same direction. Under the heading of "the social impact," Professor Carr speaks of the position of the working-class and the trade unions in the U.S.S.R. and thinks that in some respects "the western world is travelling far more rapidly than most people yet realise along the Soviet path." In the chapter on "the impact on international relations," he discusses the effect of the Soviet foreign trade monopoly, and the advantage which Soviet propaganda has in "the frank appeal which it makes to the masses"—although he points out what is generally unknown, that "alone among the principal governments of the world, the Soviet Government never possessed a department of its own for international propaganda" (p. 73). His fifth chapter gives an account of "the ideological impact" of Marxism, to the reviewer's mind the least successful section of the book, just because Professor Carr in his account of Marxist theory shows that he has broken very little loose from the philosophical moorings of idealism. The sixth chapter gives some historical perspectives of relations between Russia and the rest of Europe in the past, arguing for "an attempt to find a compromise, a half-way house, a synthesis between conflicting ways of life."

Ever since the November Revolution, Soviet statesmen have been declaring their faith in the possibility and desirability of peaceful existence — which means co-operation — between the Socialist State and the capitalist world. Although they succeeded, once or twice, in having the principle endorsed—notably at Geneva in 1928—it was only too obvious that the capitalist states and their ruling parties did not, and would not, accept the principle. To colour their refusal, politicians of every hue—from the deep black of the Nazis and the Vatican to the yellowish-pink of the Ramsay MacDonalds and their present-day imitators—have always invented all kinds of theoretical reasons, grossly distorting or directly falsifying information about the Soviet Union in the process. Professor Carr's book is useful and novel just because, starting from the accepted dogmas of capitalist democracy, it first explodes a good many of the falsehoods about Soviet life and policy and then makes a manful attempt to provide a theoretical basis for co-operation and friendship with the U.S.S.R.

It is all the more interesting because the author had to struggle with many of his own past prejudices. As recently as 1942, in his *Conditions of Peace*, he was still writing of Soviet "lip-service to democracy," equating Socialist planned economy with the war plans of Nazi Germany, speaking of a

* *The Soviet Impact on the Western World* (ix and 116 pp., Macmillan, 1946. 5*s*).

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"revival of Russian nationalism under Stalin," describing the Soviet trade unions as "harnessed to the State," and so forth. In these and many other respects he has made noteworthy advances. This is not to say that readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY will not find much to question still in his propositions: for example, the statement about English democracy (p. 12) unqualified by any reference to India and the colonies which constitute the essential setting for the actual, historical, concrete English democracy we know—that its essence is "the right to dissent"; or the suggestion that "Hitlerism was not capitalist" (p. 27). He is mistaken in thinking that "workers' control" in the Soviet factories in 1917-18 was intended as a form of nationalisation (pp. 54, 56), that the Soviet worker's sense of control over his factory is limited to realisation that governmental power as a whole is "vested in an authority representing his class" (p. 55), that Marxism "finally deprived the individual of his individuality" (pp. 94-5), etc. Nevertheless, the fact remains that what makes Professor Carr's book significant and important are his new words, not his old.

No doubt this is why the book has been received with a marked lack of enthusiasm—and even of mention—by most capitalist journals. But it will repay careful and critical study by Marxists and others concerned for the interests of the British working people.

A. R.

Shorter Notices

New Deal for Transport (Communist Party, 16 pp. 3*d*).

THE OPENING clause of the Transport Bill declares: "The purpose of the Bill is to set up in Great Britain a publicly owned system of inland transport (other than by air) and of port facilities."

Why nationalise? Who stands to gain? How has private enterprise failed? What does the Bill do for the transport user (as consumer or as traveller) and for the transport worker —the driver, docker, railwayman, etc.? Who will control? What compensation

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to pay? Does the Bill really meet the needs of the situation?

The new Communist Party pamphlet raises and answers all these questions. It is a most timely publication, not only because the Bill is now before Parliament but also because the strike of the transport workers has brought to light the intolerable working conditions of the road drivers, while the successive raising of rail and bus fares has made the travelling public increasingly critical of a service where the decline in efficiency is only equalled by the rise in tariff.

The pamphlet is an excellent critical analysis: it is also a pointer to activity. "A Big Fight is on, and it is not one which can be left to the M.Ps. . . . . This is your affair. . . . You cannot help being affected by the Bill."

A. G. P.

Was Italy all anti-fascist?

Italy Speaks by Barbara Barclay Carter (Gollancz, pp. 194, 6*s*).

THIS IS not Italy speaking, but Miss Carter trying to prove that Italy was, and is, an ally rather than an ex-enemy, and that therefore the peace terms are unjust to Italy. Her attempts to show all Italy as anti-fascist are irritating, and her rather scrappy items on the magnificent work of the Partisans read like a shopping list. Apart from Don Luigi Sturzo who contributes a preface, do Italians really believe Churchill's fatuity that "one man and one man alone" bears the guilt of Italy's crimes of aggression? Certainly none of the Partisans whom I have met subscribed to such nonsense. On the contrary, they were constantly maddened by the lack of discrimination shown by A.M.G. officials in the Italians whom they protected or promoted to responsible positions.

During the war the Partisans were mishandled by the British and American authorities, partly perhaps because their potential assistance was underrated, but mainly because of a deliberate policy of playing down the Left. Since the end of hostilities this policy has shown itself in protection for the reactionaries and intolerance with those forces who did play an active part in liberating Italy. Given a chance to speak, democratic Italy will not ask, Miss Carter, for bombers, but for the complete removal of all British and American forces so that the Italians themselves can deal with the menace of fascism daily growing more bold under allied protection.

The book is unnecessarily difficult to read, with its long, involved sentences indignantly peppered with punctuation marks.

R. F.

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